

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 are pending in the present application.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Friday et al. (U.S. Patent 6,183,627, herein "Friday"); and Claims 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Friday.

Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the outstanding ground for the rejections for the following reasons.

In particular, Applicants respectfully submit that Friday does not disclose or suggest the feature "... a step of *thermally cracking the heavy oil content obtained substantially from a bottom of the distilling section* into a lightened thermally cracked product ..."
(emphasis added) as recited in Claim 1.

More specifically, in Friday, a non-distilled fraction 18 drawn from the bottom of a distillation column 14 is *not* led to a thermal cracker 24 directly but is led to a solvent deasphalting (SDA) unit 19. The solvent deasphalting (SDA) unit 19 separates the non-distilled fraction 18 into an asphaltene stream 21 and a deasphaltene oil stream 20. Asphaltene is removed as the asphaltene stream 21, and the deasphaltene oil stream 20 is combined with a hydrogen donor stream 17A at a node 22. Then, the deasphaltene oil stream 20 and the hydrogen donor stream 17A are mixed, and forms a thermally crack stream 23. The thermally crack stream 23 is then led to the thermal cracker 24, and the thermal cracker 24 thermally cracks the thermally crack stream 23.

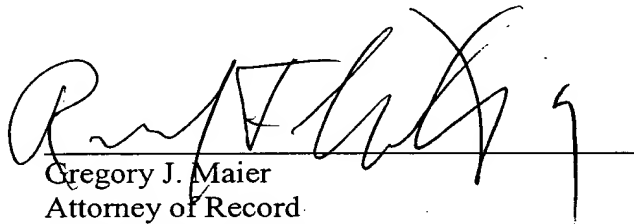
Applicants respectfully submit that the *thermally crack stream 23* of Friday is different from the claimed *heavy oil content* obtained substantially from a bottom of the distilling section.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claim 1 and each of the claims depending therefrom are patentably distinguishable over the reference of record.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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